

Possible Questions and Answers on Additives

What are additives?

The Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health of the U.K. (the Hunter Committee), defines additives as follows:

"Any substance (other than water but excluding reconstituted sheet made wholly from tobacco) which is added in the course of manufacture of a smoking product to alter the smoking quality, appearance or any other characteristic of the product."

Additives are usually referred to in layman's language as preservatives, humectants and flavours.

The Hunter Committee's definition is a precise scientific definition and the one used throughout the world.

What are preservatives?

In the tobacco industry, preservatives are used to assure that products reach the consumer in prime condition.

They are widely used in food products.

For example, Benzoic acid (used in fruit jam and tomato paste) and sorbic acid (used in bread and cheese) are two additives on the list that are preservatives.

What are humectants?

They are additives used to retain moisture in the product. They are also used in food products. Sorbitol is a humectant which is also used in candies.

What are flavours?

They are additives used to give a particular flavour to a product and which are also widely used in food products.

Menthol is the best known additive on the list that is a flavour.

What is the Hunter Committee?

It is a committee with strong medical and scientific representation appointed in the U.K. to study and report on a number of aspects of smoking and health.

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In its December 1978 report, the Committee published an approved list of additives based on available scientific information of long term usage without evidence of danger to health.

The Committee has also established guidelines for the testing and addition to the list and pursuant to which a number of additions have been made.

What is the German list?

West Germany has also developed guidelines for the approval of additives. These have resulted in the inclusion of a number of additives that have not been considered by the Hunter Committee.

The U.K. and German guidelines are believed to reflect the most advanced knowledge on the subject which is known to the Western world.

Philip Morris uses only tobacco additives which have been approved for use by either the Hunter Committee or West Germany.

Does your company use any additives in its cigarettes?

Yes, but like other cigarette companies,

We do not reveal the identity or the number of additives we use, nor in which brands they are used, because we consider this information to be of a proprietary nature.

The list made public in the United States contains more than 700 ingredients. Just how many of these does your company use in the manufacture of its cigarettes?

Their number, and their identity are considered confidential for they are of a proprietary nature. It is most important that they remain confidential for competitive reasons. All ingredients used conform to the U.K. list and German guidelines.

Are tobacco additives natural or chemical products?

They may be either natural or synthetic products.

In the food industry, manufacturers are obliged by law to list the ingredients making up their product and this does not seem to present problems in terms of protecting their trade secrets or competitive position. Why is the tobacco industry concerned with the secrecy of the ingredients in its products?

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We do believe that a similar approach would, in the tobacco industry, threaten the competitive position of the companies.

But under the current approach, a smoker is not capable of knowing which additives, if any, are present in his or her cigarette brand.

That is true, but at the same time, the current approach does reassure smokers that only those additives that have been approved in either the U.K. or West Germany may be used in the manufacture of their cigarette.

What would happen if a smoker had reasons to believe that certain additives which may be present in his or her cigarette may have adverse health effects on him or her such as allergic reactions? Would it be possible for this person to know whether a particular additive is present in a particular cigarette brand?

In a case like this, our company would cooperate with a physician, on a private and confidential basis, in an attempt to solve this problem. However, under no circumstances would the company disclose information regarded as proprietary information.

It has been argued that most of the additives contained in the Hunter Committee list have never been subjected to any tests. Why should smokers be reassured by the approval of the Hunter Committee?

The Hunter Committee only approved additives about which, on the basis of long term usage, no evidence existed of danger to health.

The Hunter Committee and West Germany have developed sophisticated and stringent guidelines for tests to be made before any new additives will be approved for use in tobacco products.

Why does your company use additives where it does?

In the formulation of our brands, our company is guided by the needs of its smokers in terms of taste, quality and other characteristics which are important to smokers in their choice of a particular brand of cigarettes. In those few cases where we use additives, we do so because there seems to be a demand from Canadian smokers for a cigarette with certain characteristics that can be obtained by the use of one or more additives.

Are additives present in cigarette tobaccos for roll-your-own cigarettes?

Yes, some additives are present in the recipes of our cigarette tobaccos for roll-your-own cigarettes. All of these, however, are approved for use in tobacco by either the U.K. or West Germany.

Are any additives on the U.K. or German lists cancer-causing?

These additives have been approved for use in tobacco products on the basis of long term usage without evidence of danger to health.

The list of additives made public in the United States indicates maximum doses in which these may be used. Are these doses indicated for health reasons?

The maximum doses are taken from the U.K. and German lists which means that at these levels, there is no evidence, after long term usage, that type may be harmful to health.

Is there a possibility that the use of an additives may not be harmful by itself but that, over time, small doses may accumulate in the human body to reach higher levels where they may not be so safe?

The Hunter Committee only approves these additives because, on the basis of long term usage, there was no evidence that they represented any danger to health.

How is the question of the use of additives handled in the USA regarding information to the public?

In the United States, under the Comprehensive Smoking Education Act, it is provided that a list of all ingredients added to tobacco in the manufacture of cigarettes must be deposited annually to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. All information may be proved through a third party and is expressly stated to be trade secrets or confidential information under the Freedom of Information Act. The Act provides that it shall not be revealed to any person except Congress or one of its sub-committees on a confidential basis.

Is there any country in the world where tobacco additives must be listed on the packages of the various cigarette brands?

There is no country in the world where specific additives must be listed on the package of cigarettes.

Will your company provide the Government with a list of the additives it uses in the manufacture of its products?

We would be prepared to provide an annual certificate attesting that any additives employed by us conform to internationally recognized standards list that is made public today. We also do not use any additives unless they have been added to the U.K. and German lists and our list has been amended accordingly.

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It has been said that cigarette smoke contains thousands of chemicals. Is this not the result of the presence of numerous tobacco additives in cigarettes?

It is true that cigarette smoke contains traces of thousands of chemicals. This is not the result of the presence of additives in the cigarettes but rather that of the very chemically-complex make up natural tobacco. When burned, tobacco, like many other natural products, decomposes in many chemical compounds.

The list of tobacco additives released in the U.S. contains products such as Mace, Shellac, Coumarine and Turpentine. What are these products?

Mace is a spice contained naturally in nutmeg and is used in the food industry.

Shellac, which is found naturally in trees in India, is used in food and pharmaceutical products, in the preparation of the coating of confectionaries and of medicinal tablets.

Turpentine, is a gum that is found on certain trees. Turpentine gum is used in baked goods, and steam-distilled turpentine has been used in candy, baked goods and chewing gum.

Are any of these present in your products?

Our company will not reveal the identity of the additives it uses in the manufacture of its products nor in which brands they are used because we consider this information to be a trade secret.

We will reassure smokers, however, that where we do use additives, we only use those that have been approved for use in tobacco products in either the U.K. or West Germany, and that these have been approved on the basis that, after long term usage, there was no evidence available to indicate that they might constitute a danger to health.